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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES

BRIEFING

EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Erdogan signals a new decree - Hurriyet

Gul: Negotiations with U.S. continue - Hurriyet

U.S. to increase troops in Gulf to 250,000 - Sabah

Bush awaiting Turkey's decision - Milliyet

Bush insists U.S. still hopeful - Turkiye

U.S.: No northern front without Turkey - Aksam

Turkey is cornered on Iraq, EU - Vatan

OPINION MAKERS

U.S. gives Stingers, heavy weapons to Kurds - Cumhuriyet

Ankara warns northern Iraqi Kurds - Radikal

Turkish obstacle on the path to war - Yeni Safak

Ankara summit for referendum in Cyprus - Zaman

FINANCIAL JOURNALS

Tensions ease in markets - Dunya

Iraq war delayed until Spring - Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Iraq: AKP leader Erdogan said on Tuesday that Turkey could not afford to remain a passive observer of developments in Iraq, and signaled that the motion rejected by the parliament last Saturday would be discussed again soon. U.S. Ambassador to Ankara Robert Pearson, who made a 'surprise' call on Prime Minister Gul on Tuesday, conveyed messages of hope from President Bush to the Turkish government. Gul complained to Pearson about insufficient U.S. support, and demanded a clear response from Washington about the status of the Turkmen in a post-war Iraq. Ambassador Pearson said there would be no aid without the approval of U.S. troops, but added he was hopeful for a second decision. Erdogan's advisor Cuneyd Zapsu has told American papers that Erdogan has to strengthen his position in order to convince lawmakers, and stressed the necessity for new U.S. offers to Turkey. All papers expect the motion to be discussed by the parliament in mid-March, after the Siirt by-election on March 9. Reports see it as possible that the U.S. and Turkey might work out a new deal with slight changes in the amount of economic aid and terms of debt repayment.

Comments highlight the fact that after the parliamentary refusal, the U.S. has started voicing objection to a Turkish military presence in northern Iraq, and refer to U/S of State Grossman's warning to Turkey to refrain from unilateral military action in northern Iraq. "Radikal" columnist Murat Yetkin talks about how some in the Turkish Foreign Ministry felt uneasy about Grossman's remarks, which were interpreted as threatening. Yetkin also points to Grossman's 'evasiveness' when asked by a journalist on February 23 whether the US would side with the Turks or the Kurds in the event a choice becomes necessary. Grossman's response reportedly had a negative impact in the minds of some parliamentarians. "Milliyet" believes that Turkey's military is nervous that it may not be able to thwart a new Kurdish state in Iraq after a war in the absence of an agreement with the U.S. An Iraqi Kurdish official says that the U.S. has armed Kurdish military units with Stinger

missiles and heavy weapons in advance of the war on Baghdad, according to "Cumhuriyet." "This is absolutely a provocation," Foreign Minister Yakis said, criticizing Iraqi Kurds who burned Turkish flags during demonstrations in northern Iraq on Monday.

Cyprus: Turkish Cypriot leader Denktas arrived in Ankara on Tuesday for talks on a UN request to hold a public referendum on March 30 on the revised Annan peace plan to unite the divided island. Dailies predict tough days for Denktas as political parties in the Turkish Cypriot sector as well as the AKP have given a green light to the UN offer. The EU has told Turkey that full membership in the Union will be difficult without a solution on Cyprus. "It will be much more difficult for the EU to begin accession negotiations with Turkey after May next year, when the Greek Cypriot side, which is not recognized by Turkey, becomes a full member of the EU," said EU enlargement commissioner Verheugen.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq/US-Turkey

"Turkish military is uneasy"

Hasan Cemal analyzed in mass appeal Milliyet (3/5): "The Turkish military is disturbed by the fact that the authorization decree (to permit deployment of American troops in Turkey and Turkish troops in Northern Iraq) was rejected by the parliament. The military wants to be in northern Iraq to protect Turkey's national security interests. With the decree rejected, the Turkish military presence in northern Iraq has lost its legitimacy. . Interestingly enough, we keep receiving negative indications about the Turkish army's intervention in northern Iraq. Marc Grossman, for instance, emphasized two points as Washington's view: Turkey should not act unilaterally in northern Iraq; and Turkey is about to lose its chance to participate in the Iraq process. . Along with the recent anti-Turkish demonstrations in the region, we should be able to read Washington's message as follows: 'In the absence of Turkish permission for a US northern front, the US will not be helpful to Turkey on northern Iraq.' . Due to these developments, the Washington-Ankara line for a second attempt for a parliamentary decision is underway. AKP leader Erdogan's latest remark to the party members, that 'we cannot afford to sit and watch development' is no coincidence."

"Bargaining continues"

Zeynep Gurcanli wrote in tabloid Star (3/5): "It is very realistic to believe that the AKP government is preparing to sit at the table with the US again, but it will be under Erdogan's premiership. It is also not a coincidence that the government imposed additional taxes immediately after the permission was declined by the parliament. . Most likely, the second decree will be presented to the parliament and with the help of Erdogan's pressure upon the AKP deputies, and it will be accepted with a large majority. This will also serve Erdogan in his efforts to reclaim his leadership position. In sum, sooner or later we will see the American soldiers on Turkish soil."

PEARSON